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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the stress and struggles faced by survivors, following physical and/or emotional loss. It explains how counselors must be prepared to assist when grief strikes the nation, the classroom, or the individual. Each incident carries its own uniqueness and must be dealt with in light of the victim's personal need and their belief system. The paper includes several objectives, and lists of information follow each objective. It provides counselors with information that will assist them in recognizing symptomatic behaviors common to bereavement and loss, such as the stages of grief and the colors of grief. Counselors will have the opportunity to discuss some common myths about grief. They will also review intervention strategies and activities when counseling those experiencing grief and loss. Strategies are listed for helping those coping with grief. It includes suggested activities for grief groups. Names and addresses of several resources are included for further information on grief and loss. (JDM)

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THE CHALLENGE OF GRIEF: COUNSELING THE SURVIVORS

Presented by

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Introduction:

In this era of computers, machines and high tech tools which are hailed as providing "better living through technology" too often the human element becomes lost. Although the genius of man continues to increase the speed and efficiency of computers and machines, technology can also intensify the isolation of an individual. We must remain vigilant to the importance of human compassion. As crises strike, man's effort to cope underlines the human element of caring; the importance cannot be denied. As counselors we must be prepared to offer the message **"WE CARE"**.

This presentation will focus on the stress and struggles faced by survivors, following physical and/or emotional loss. Counselors and mental health providers must develop plans for implementing the healing process that follows loss.

Death is permanent and universal. Throughout the world religious groups, cultural and racial diversity account for a different response to loss. Denial, guilt, anger, bargaining and eventual acceptance of the loss are phases of grief. It is essential to understand the attitudes about death, the phases of grief, and the influence these attitudes have on the survivors; how it colors behavior.

Other forms of loss are more subtle and involve unresolved disappointment in personal life. Whether a minor or major loss has occurred, most persons experience bereavement and grief, which for many people precipitates a crisis state. It is important that any counselor dealing with this crisis realizes that it is the personal and subjective response of the individual that determines the impact of the loss, not whether other people believe it is a major or minor loss.

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THE NEED:

With advanced technology, traumatic incidences worldwide are brought into our living roo... where vicariously we share in the loss and grief of others. It is when someone we know, a... or feel a bond with dies, is seriously injured, or experiences a loss that we also share in that... When a national leader, a popular entertainer, or sports figure is involved, we become involv... As a nation we mourn and experience grief at a certain level. Often prople cope by donatin... money to the family, sending flowers, or making expressions of sympathy in other ways. Th... kind of grief tends to be short lived for those on the periphery.

It is however, very different when the loss or grief hits our own family or close friend. This ... trauma effects us personally, deeply, and often remains unresolved for years. Counselors need ... be prepared to assist when grief strikes the nation, the classroom, or the individual. Each inci... carries its own uniqueness and must be dealt with in light of the victim's personal need and beli... system.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Counselors will receive information which will assist them in recognizing symptomatic behaviors common to bereavement and loss.

2. Counselors will have the opportunity to discuss some common myths about grief.

3. Counselors will review intervention strategies and activities when counseling those experiencing grief and loss.

4. Counselors will have the opportunity to share personal experiences and intervention strategies to cope with loss..

5. Counselors can share the response to loss observed in different cultures.

STAGES OF GRIEF
Elizabeth Kubler-Ross
On Death and Dying

1. Denial and isolation
2. Anger
3. Bargaining
4. Depression
5. Acceptance
6. Hope

COLORS OF GRIEF
Adapted from
Scriptographic Publication *About Grief*

1. Shock
2. Denial
3. Anger
4. Bargaining
5. Guilt
6. Depression
7. Acceptance
8. Hope

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Definition of Grief: Grief is the feeling of loss when someone we love dies or is lost to us. Every person and every situation is unique. Therefore, no one feels exactly the same grief feelings as another. Most people feel some of these feelings for a long period of time, some for only a short time. In times of grief we all need support from friends and our faith.

SOME MYTHS ABOUT GRIEF (From Scriptographic Publication *About Grief*)

1. Tears are a sign of weakness.
2. It's best to avoid discussing a loss with a grieving person.
3. Children should be sheltered from grief.
4. An end of grief means an end to caring about a loved one.

YOU CAN HELP A GRIEVING PERSON (From Scriptographic Publication *About Grief*)

1. Be present if you can.
2. Be a good listener.
3. Encourage independence.
4. Be patient.
5. Help with chores.
6. Assist with cards and letters.
7. Lend a hand with meals.
8. Answer the telephone.
9. Remember - recovery takes a long time. Continue your support for as long as it is needed.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN NORMAL GRIEF
Theresa Rando Grieving

You can expect that grief will:

1. Take longer than most people think.
2. Require more energy than you would ever have imagined.
3. Involve many changes and be continually changing.
4. Show itself in all spheres of your life - psychological, social and physical.
5. Depend on how you perceive the loss.
6. Entail mourning not only for that person, but for the hopes and dreams you held for and with that person, and for the needs that will go unmet because of the death.
7. Involve a wide variety of feelings and reactions such as depression and sadness.

You will:

1. Grieve for many things, both symbolic and tangible - not just death alone.
2. Grieve for what you have lost now and for what you have lost for the future.
3. Experience resurrected old issues, feelings, and unresolved conflicts from the past.

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You may:

1. Feel some anger and depression such as irritability, frustration, annoyance, and intolerance, even at those trying to help.
2. Feel anger and guilt, or at least some manifestation of these emotions.
3. Have some identity confusion as a result of the major loss and the fact you are experiencing reactions that may be quite different for you.

You may:

1. Have a lack of self-esteem.
2. Have a lack of self-concern.
3. Experience grief spasm - acute upsurges of grief that occur suddenly with no warning.
4. Have trouble thinking, memory, organization, intellectual processing, and decision making.
5. Feel like you are going crazy.
6. Be obsessed with death and preoccupied with the deceased.
7. Find yourself acting socially in ways that are different from before.
8. Begin a search for meaning and may question your religion and philosophy of life.

STRATEGIES FOR HELPING THOSE COPING WITH GRIEF

1. Tell the truth.
2. Think like the client (ie. think like a child).
3. Avoid judgment.
4. Use appropriate language.
5. Acknowledge, explore, and accept feelings.
6. Provide a safe, open atmosphere.
7. Be a role model
8. Provide an opportunity for sharing beliefs.
9. Acknowledge the importance of death.
10. Involve client in activities that provide opportunities to remember. Memories are comforting, signify the importance of the deceased person, represent the importance of life and death, and recognize the reality of one's personal pain/loss/grief. Memories fill an empty space.

ACTIVITIES

* Suggested activities can be adjusted to a specific situation and age group. The following activities are suggested for grief groups, but with some modifications may be used on an individual basis

1. Discuss the stages or colors of grief.
2. Create memory books.
3. Read stories, poetry, books, and articles about grief.
4. Have the group members write letters to someone mentioned in the above selection. If they choose, let members share letters within the group.
5. Write your own story of loss and share it with the group.

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6. Write letters to each other on behalf of the deceased.
7. Write letters to the deceased.
8. Discuss myths about grief.
9. Draw a picture of a happy time with the deceased.
10. Discuss how to assist others with grief.
11. Identify resources for getting help and needs met.
12. Create a memorial collage.
13. Have members share their dreams of the deceased and discuss them.
14. Discuss words used to define and describe death.
15. Share about funerals or other rituals and their purpose.
16. Write letters to a close family member who may be dying.
17. Remember a funny time with the deceased and share it.

DEBRIEFING

Counselors working with an individual who has suffered a major loss may find that the experience dredges up memories and feelings of loss within themselves. It is important for the counselor to have a support system to assist with coping. Sometimes a friend is available with whom to share, sometimes a time of meditation, prayer, or group activity is necessary for the care giver.

When working in a group setting the counselor must be aware that the activity may arouse latent anxiety in one or more of the group members. These feelings must be dealt with in order to being the group to successful closure.

Reminding the group that they have each other, the counselor, and their support resources is important. It is sometimes necessary to reconvene occasionally to assess progress in the grieving process. Saying good-bye with hugs, handshakes, or pats on the backs reinforces the universal need for a human touch.

SELECTED RESOURCES

1. AARP - American Association of Retired Persons
Social Outreach and Support Section
601 E. Street, N.W.; Washington, DC 20049

Publications

Bibliography on Grief and Loss	P.F. 1469 (893) D435
Customs of Bereavement	P.F. 44591 (1909) D14110
Celebrating Diversity	P.F. 4590 (1091) D14078

2. **California Association for Counseling and Development**
   Professional Development Committee
   2555 East Chapman Ave. - Suite 201, Fullerton, Ca. 92831
   Phone (714) 871-6460 FAX: (714) 871-5132

   Publication
   Caution: Crisis Ahead Counseling Skills Workshop Manual

3. **Channing L. Bete Co., Inc.**
   200 State Road, South Deerfield, Ma. 00173-0200
   Phone: (800) 628-7733 FAX (800) 499-6464

   Publication
   Scriptographic Booklets

4. **Los Angeles Unified School District**
   450 Grand Ave., Los Angeles, Ca. 90012
   Phone: (213) 625-6000 FAX (213) 742-8195

   Publication
   A Handbook for Crisis Intervention

5. **Southwest Regional Laboratory (SWIRL)**
   4665 Lampson Ave., Los Alamitos, Ca. 90720
   Phone: (310) 598-7661

   Publication
   Preventing Chaos in Times of Crisis

6. **TAG - Teen Age Grief, Inc.**
   Linda Cunningham, Founder
   P O Box 220034, Newhall, Ca. 91322-0034
   Phone (805) 253-1932

   Publication
   Teen Age Grief: A Training Manual for Teen Grief Support

7. **Active Parenting Publishing**
   801 Franklin Court - Suite B, Marrieta Ga. 30067

   Publication
   Helping and Healing Thru Loss. A video-based program related to grief and loss

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